How the State Dept. Tried to Explain the Use of Gas, Pps. 2-3

"It Was Worth The Boy's Dying"—Jimmie Lee Jackson's 82-Year-Old Grandfather

Selma, Ala. Mar. 21—It was like a July 4 picnic and a pilgrimage, a protest and an exaltation. One 82-year old black man marching at the head of the line knew better what it was like than anyone else. Cager Lee was the grandfather of Jimmie Lee Jackson, the 26-year old Negro from nearby Marion who died nearly a month ago after being shot by an Alabama State trooper following a demonstration. "Yes, it was worth the boy's dying", said Lee as he walked in the front line with the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. "He was a sweet boy. He took me to church every Sunday, worked hard. But he had to die for something. And thank God it was for this. . . . There was but one white man said he was sorry for Jimmie Lee. He sent me the biggest box of groceries—rice, coffee, sugar, flour. And he called me and said 'I'm so sorry. I don't know what to do.' But no other white man said a word. And I lived and worked in Perry County every day of my life." —*Paul Good in the* Washington Post, *March 22.*

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Straining At the Gnat of A Little "Non-Lethal" Gas

From one point of view the uproar over the use of "non-lethal" gas in Vietnam is ludicrous. Here we are, a people prepared to incinerate ourselves and the world if our leaders deem it necessary, and we go into a tizzy because a relatively minor disabling gas is used in Vietnam! Our own men, and the forces we arm, have long been burning up villages with napalm; we have begun to use phosphorus shells, also intended to burn alive; we have been trying out "anti-personnel" bombs which scatter sharp razor-like fragments in a wide area and a new type of bullet which "somersaults" on entering the flesh in a way which makes ordinarily minor wounds fatal.

Our military have speculated about the use of nuclear weapons, and—to test public response—indicated that at some stage as we raise the ante of escalation, we may use them. This has created only a minor ripple of momentary revulsion, on the way from the headlines to the more engrossing sports or women's pages. Then along comes the news that we have been supplying the South Vietnamese with a "non-lethal" gas not much worse than tear gas and everyone acts as if the war had reached a new plateau of horror.

Just A Problem in Brain-Washing

Le Monde in Paris angrily takes issue with an unidentified U.S. officer in Saigon who said the problem was to accustom the public to the use of this new gas. The officer was quite right. We have accustomed the public mind at home and abroad to accept much worse things. Our policy in Vietnam is based on the view that we have a right to rain fire and death on the whole area (1) because we suspect its people if given a free choice would accept a government in which Communists played a leading part and (2) because we think our national interest demands that we maintain an armed presence in Southeast Asia as a forward base against China. The end for us justifies the means, and the public is easily brain-washed by our multitudinous "information" agencies into accepting both. Every hour the news tickers click out dreadful incidents which register hardly at all on our numbed minds and calloused consciences. Children are killed in a schoolyard because we suspected there might be Viet Cong in the village. Fifteen people were killed and nine others drowned because we bombed a sampan on suspicion only to find that it had legal clearance for its trip and indeed three of the dead were South Vietnamese soldiers. Fifty helicopters and 37 U.S. warplanes douse a whole area of central Vietnam with bombs and gunfire because we thought guerrillas might be there; none were found but there is no mention of what this did to the people living in the area. Respected South Vietnamese who speak up for a cease-fire are separated from their families and deported without trial, though ostensibly the war is being fought to give the Vietnamese the right to determine their own destiny. If our spirits were not so dulled by our own propaganda, we would realize how shamefully our country is acting.

The blueprint we are following is that application of terror by bombardment, of "victory by airpower," which the Italians first tried out over Ethiopia and the Germans over Guernica and elsewhere in the Spanish civil war. A war we have lost on the ground against poorly armed forces a fifth the size of ours is being turned into an air war against a people with few air defenses, no planes in the South and few in the

(Continued on Page Four)

Just When We Started Getting Interested

Mr. Hanson BALDWIN: General, there is a phrase in your book which seems to me to go to the heart of this whole matter of the use of nuclear weapons. You say that we must maintain, and I quote "a credible capability to achieve a military victory under any set of conditions." Now how do you define "a military victory" in a nuclear war?

Gen. POWER [retiring commander of Strategic Air Command]: Very simply. You have an aggressor who attacks you. You have sufficient strength to stop that military action, destroy him militarily and still retain a superior military posture. That is what I mean by a victory. In a true sense there wouldn't be any winner. It would be a hollow victory, but you can stop the military action and retain control. That is what I mean by a victory.

Mr. BALDWIN: With how many dead?

Mr. SPIVAK: I am sorry to interrupt but our time unfortunately is up.

—*Meet the Press, March 21.*

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How the State Dept. Tried to Explain Away the Use of "Non-Lethal" Gases

The news that the U.S. was furnishing "non-lethal" gases for use by the South Vietnamese Army precipitated a sharp session at the State Department's daily briefing that day, March 22. The State Department's spokesman, Robert McCloskey, was subjected to skeptical and even derisive queries.

On Capitol Hill, the news provoked dismay but few would comment. Among the few were Senator Dodd of Connecticut who defended use of the gases and Senator Morse of Oregon who criticized use of the gas as contrary to the Geneva Convention of 1925. This was signed by the U.S. but never ratified by the Senate. "Its language states quite correctly," Morse declared, "that the use of gas against human beings 'has been justly condemned by the general opinion of the civilized world.' And this does not mean only lethal gases. Ones that blister the skin were commonly used in World War I and were among those intended to be outlawed by this language. So, too, I am sure are the gases which induce nausea, which we are furnishing for use in South Vietnam.*

"It is interesting to see how easy it is, once we depart from the principles of international law," Morse commented, "to violate more and more of them. Almost daily we are conducting air raids on a country with which we are not at war. These raids and the use of gas, will only further separate the U.S. from world opinion, including opinion in the Far East, which is already rising against us for our policy in Vietnam."

The State Department's briefing follows:

Q: Bob, was the State Department advised of the decision of the military authorities to use whatever kind of gas it is they are using in Vietnam?

Mr. McCLOSKEY: I might say tear gas in standard form as well as tear gas inducing nausea have been supplied by the United States and used by Vietnamese forces in a few instances. For example, to meet riots and in tactical situations where the Viet Cong have mingled with innocent people. In such a situation, that is, like the latter, rather than use artillery, air or other fire power methods, Vietnamese forces have used these types of tear gas. Such types have only temporary effects and are precisely similar to types of tear gases employed in riot control all over the world.

Q: In what cases all over the world or in any part of the world have they used nausea type tear gas. . . . Has this type ever been used in riot control?

Mr. McCLOSKEY: Yes, it is my information that it has been used.

Q: Can you tell us where?

Mr. McCLOSKEY: I can't.

Q: This goes back to the question of the Geneva Protocol of 1925 against the use of gas warfare which is a prohibition against the use of gas—a poison gas, asphyxiating gas or other gases. Now the U.S. signed the Protocol but the Senate never ratified it, so we are not bound by it legally although we have usually adhered to it or have always adhered to it previously. My question after all this is does the United States consider the use of these nauseous gases a violation of the terms of the Protocol of 1925?

Mr. McCLOSKEY: The answer in the first instance is no. . . . Now, as indicated, and for example, by a statement of President Roosevelt in 1943, the United States has interpreted the criterion affecting the use of gases or any other method of warfare as outlawing the use of what President Roosevelt described as "inhumane devices of warfare" and which President Roosevelt spoke of as "outlawed by the general opinion of civilized mankind." Now the use of tear gas, at least in instances of the type which I have cited, is not contrary to international law and practice.

Q: What is the basis of this statement that it is not contrary to international law or practice? Is this the judgment of the State Department or are tear gases recognized by some document as being different than other gases of the Protocol?

Mr. McCLOSKEY: Well, the basis for the last statement cited by President Roosevelt and the judgment of the State Department in the present situation.

Q: Is there any international agreement, understanding, resolution or something which recognizes tear gas as being

* The Geneva convention of 1925 says, "Whereas the use in war of asphyxiating, poisonous or other gases, and of all analogous liquids, materials or devices, has been justly condemned by the general opinion of the civilized world; and whereas the prohibition of such use has been declared in treaties to which the majority of the powers of the world are parties; and to the end that this principle shall be universally accepted as a part of international law, binding alike the conscience and the practice of nations: Declare, that the high contracting parties, so far as they are not already parties to treaties prohibiting such use, accept this prohibition, agree to extend this prohibition to the use of bacteriological methods of warfare and agree to be bound as betwen themselves according to the terms of this declaration."

Presumably They Wouldn't Have Minded If They Hadn't Been Prompted

"Prompted by Viet Cong agents, villagers from the hamlet of Man Quan attempted yesterday to use the bodies of 16 children killed by Vietnamese fighter-bombers to stir up an anti-American demonstration at Da Nang. Government troops intervened when the group arrived by sampan with the blanketed dead. They dispersed a gathering crowd on the waterfront. U.S. officials said Americans had nothing to do with the air strike at the village, which one source described as 'sympathetic to but not dominated by the Viet Cong'."

—AP from Da Nang in Baltimore Sun, *March 19.*

How Those Who Dare Speak Up For Peace Are Treated By The Military In Vietnam

"The South Vietnam Government, after a week of countermanding orders and hesitation, appears finally to have made up its mind to deport to North Vietnam the three men who have become known as 'peace-mongers' for signing a cease-fire appeal. Possibly through American intercession, though no one can be sure, the monstrous plan to forcibly parachute them into the north has been abandoned. . . . Vietnamese journalists and foreign photographers have been invited by the Government to fly up to record the occasion. . . . The three—Dr. Pham Van Huyen, Professor Ton That Duong Ky and a journalist, Mr. Cao Minh Thien—evidently have not been asked their desired destination. They initially signed an appeal not to Hanoi, like the Buddhists, but to the Communist 'Liberation Front' and the South Vietnam government. The Government claims documentary proof that they are all linked with the communist organization, but has not attempted to publish it. Neither has there been any attempt to stage a trial."

—From Saigon in The Times *(London) March 19.*

"They were duly marched this morning across the open bridge over the Ben Hai river . . . in the presence of their wives, who had been flown up from Saigon. . . . The three men themselves were not asked and were not allowed to speak to the press. It is understood, however, that two refused to sign humiliating pleas to remain in the south. In the event, except for one who was jauntily smoking a cigar, they trudged rather wearily out north. The end of this sorry business is not yet in sight for more deportations are under consideration. . . . One Army officer told me today that the idea was to put the fear of hell into anyone hankering after a 'peace of communists'."

—From Saigon in The Times *(London) March 20.*

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A Negro Congressman Asks Us to Recall Those Nazi 10-for-1 Reprisal Raids

As our bombing moves into the north, it becomes more likely that [North] Vietnam will have to respond militarily. Our business of reprisal raids, which destroy a greater amount of human life and property than were destroyed in the Vietcong raid originally, unfortunately leads us to think of the retaliation of the Nazis during World War II, when they killed 10 members of the French resistance whenever a German soldier was killed. I am not saying that our responses recently were even nearly as inhumane in intent as the Nazi's retaliations, but I do remind you that this kind of total retaliation to people fighting for a cause can only intensify the struggle materially and psychologically and, in this case, when a settlement must inevitably be hoped for in the hearts of all of us, this procedure only lessens the chances for peace. With a spreading war, negotiation becomes more difficult and use of nuclear weapons becomes a more likely and monstrous possibility. . . . Conference table sessions have never been so eminently needed.

—*Rep. Robert Nix* (D., Penn.), *in the House, March 16.*

a device for pacification of a population or say, for use in civic disturbances and that sort of thing?

Mr. McCLOSKEY: No, nothing has come to my attention on the books in that specific respect.

Q: But citing FDR doesn't prove anything legally. . . .

Mr. McCLOSKEY: Well, you have nothing stronger than my statement which is the consensus of the Department of State.

Q: This might sound like a facetious question but it is not. If you can't tell a healthy peasant from a healthy Viet Cong, how the hell do you tell a sick peasant from a sick Viet Cong?

Mr. McCLOSKEY: Well, I don't accept—rather, I do accept your qualification that the question is not facetious. I simply can't answer.

Q: Do you know how it is used? If the Viet Cong take refuge in a village, do you make the village population sick and then go in and capture the men, shoot them or what? That would seem to be the implication of your statement.

Mr. McCLOSKEY: Well, I don't know about villages but I have cited as an example where they have mingled with innocent people, villagers who may have been in their village or out of their village; that it was used in those cases.

Q: There are two different families of this sort of stuff—there are the chemical ones we are talking about that go on through the psycho-chemical; then, there are also the biological which to the common mind usually means germ warfare, but there are biological that produce these same symptoms in some cases. Do you know whether—

Mr. McCLOSKEY: There is one identification I will give you and then not be able to explain for this latter type of gas. It is referred to as CS.

Q: Is that what we're using?

Mr. McCLOSKEY: Yes, sir.

Q: Well, CS is the ordinary tear gas and not the nauseous stuff.

How to Give A Liberal More Confidence

Johnson City, Tex.—Turning to one of the [seven] new appointees [named by the President to top Federal positions] he [Johnson] said some people "charge that you are a left-winger." To another he said "you are called a right-winger." He added, "I don't want you to be any kind of a winger. All I want you to do is what is best for America. . . . For God's sake, try to be judicious." Johnson told why he had held up reappointing Charles R. Ross, Vermont Republican, as a member of the Federal Power Commission for many months since his term expired last June 22. Ross listened intently. "I didn't reappoint him for a long time," Johnson said of Ross, "because I was told he is a consumer's advocate. I didn't want an advocate. I wanted a judge." Then Johnson said the president of a big utilities company and the head of a big gas company both told him that Ross is "a very fair man." He added that Sen. Aiken (R. Vt.), whom he respects highly, told him not to listen to people describing Ross as a radical. The President said he believes Ross will now have a "lot more assurance and confidence."

—Washington Sunday Star, *March 21.*

Mr. McCLOSKEY: I will stand corrected then. Your information is better than mine.

Q: At least that is what the Pentagon tells me.

Q: Have you received any hints or murmurs or faint indications or any other kind of indications from North Vietnam that they have been impressed by our policy of strength in North Vietnam and are considering talking to us?

Mr. McCLOSKEY: I could not say that they have been.

The Danger Signals That Warn of "Vietnams" Building Up In This Hemisphere

Danger signals fly in the fourth annual report of the Social Progress Trust Fund set up by the Alliance for Progress. Population in Latin America is growing at a high rate (between 2.7 and 2.8% annually); total farm production, at a rate of only 1.6% annually. The per capita level of food production is lower today than 10 years ago. This spells chronic hunger.

The fundamental problem of this huge peasant area is land reform, as the Alliance for Progress recognized at its inception but "to date very little has been accomplished in the field of concrete progress." The need is illustrated by a chart which shows the percentage of families either landless or with "minifundia" land holdings too tiny for adequate subsistence: Chile (47.9%), Brazil (56.5%) Colombia (64.2%), Honduras (75.1%), Ecuador (82.4%), Guatemala (83.9%), Peru (84.4%), El Salvador (89.2%). This spells a discontent that can erupt at any time into social revolution.

The rural areas are a sink of poverty, the urban areas a huge slum. A basic need in the latter is potable water and sanitation. After four years the program in this area is only a third of the goals originally set. The related housing programs only scratch the surface: the report says a reasonable estimate of the housing shortage is 15 million units which would cost in excess of $23.5 billions.

Oligarchies indifferent to their people, and unwilling to permit the breakup of huge and wasteful landholdings, are the basic factor in this stagnation. Pressure on them for change has lessened. Under Johnson the Alliance is less idealistic than under Kennedy. We are supplying military and police training on an ever larger scale to deal with popular unrest. So long as the oligarchies have these clubs at their disposal, they will make little change. And we may wake up one morning to find that they are asking American troops to put down "wars of liberation." The newspapers will forget the misery that bred them and tell us they have been caused by subversive agitators, infiltrating from South or North. Here, festering, are future Vietnams. Yet North American opinion pays little attention to the danger building up on our doorstep.

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Military Historian Warns Against Letting Military Make Policy

(Continued from Page One)

North. Our message to them is surrender or total destruction. Bombardment has expanded from fixed targets to "reconnaissance bombing" in which bombers have begun to go out with orders to shoot up anything they can find. Gen. Maxwell Taylor, on the eve of his return to Washington for another round of consultations, told the Saigon Lions Club there was no limit to the potential escalation of the war. The ill-fed and ill-armed fighters of the National Liberation Front have defeated us with that same devotion under adversity that we once showed at Valley Forge against a foreign power and its mercenaries. If Britain had acted then as we do now it would have threatened to bomb Paris unless the French government shut off its supply line and ordered the colonists to stop the rebellion. For the British were as determined then as we are now to treat the revolt as a subversive plot rather than the product of long-standing grievances.

The Worst Crime Is Silence

The military, who think force can solve everything, have taken over the direction of policy. Pressure is being applied to every maker of opinion to go along. We even have a reporter as able as Max Frankel of the *New York Times* talked into writing that escalated bombing is really a form of negotiation! Secretary Rusk, instead of making policy, goes around like a press agent lunching with editors to sell them the Pentagon's point of view. A professor of humanities at Michigan State, Thomas H. Greer, who was co-author of the seven-volume "Army Air Forces of World War II" and therefore knows something of the subject, warns us against this business of following military judgment. In a letter to the *New York Times* last Sunday (March 21) he reminds us how often "total trust in the military" has proven disastrous for great nations: the German general staff in 1939 assured Hitler of a swift military victory; Admiral Yamamoto, commander-in-chief of the Japanese Navy, was as confident; General MacArthur told President Truman the Chinese would not intervene if we escalated the war in Korea. "I could draw a far longer catalog of errors," Prof. Greer wrote, "but these examples are enough to dispel the myth of brass-hat infallability. . . . Military problems are seldom strictly military. They are bound to involve matters of politics, economics, legality, psychology and morality—matters which soldiers often find annoying and baffling. Finally, war involves imponderables no mortal can foresee. . . . Informed civilians have an inescapable duty to speak out. . . . The most insidious crimes of our time have been those of indifference and silence."

It does the heart good to see white men and black marching together in the deep South to end ancient wrong. But when will Americans awaken to bring an end to the crimes against humanity we are committing in Vietnam? No one asked the American people whether gas, lethal or not, could be used. Who knows what new horrors are being prepared behind the curtain of military secrecy while the Pentagon's highest information officer assures us of "complete candor"? The idea of victory in Vietnam by aerial blackmail which Gen. Power of the Strategic Air Command sets forth in his new book as "Design for Survival" is a design which is bringing our country into universal opprobrium and can easily lead to universal disaster.

Clarence Pickett

To know Dr. Clarence Evan Pickett was to know what the Friends mean by the inner light. It shown from this most unassuming man. It did not dazzle but it warmed and it was unforgettable. Those whom the world forgot the Friends Service Committee under his direction remembered: textile strikers during the great depression, the homeless fleeing the Spanish Civil War, Jews seeking a refuge from Nazi Germany, the armies of the uprooted after World War II, Negro victims of police brutality. When the Service Committee and Dr. Pickett were awarded a Nobel Peace Prize in 1947, the Norse spokesman said, "It is the silent help from the nameless to the nameless which is their [the Quaker] contribution to the promotion of brotherhood among nations." Dr. Pickett liked the phrase. He carried the torch of kindness from one generation to another, a saintly figure in a ravaged world.

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IFS and Senator Gruening Speak on Vietnam at New York's Carnegie Hall, 8 p.m., April 1

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